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SUBJECT: PERU: INFORMATION ON CHILD AND/OR FORCED LABOR IN
THE PRODUCTION OF GOODS

REF: STATE 043120

¶11. (U) In response to reftel request, Post submits the following information on child and/or forced labor in the production of goods in Peru. Information on child and/or forced labor in Peru is limited. Most child labor in Peru occurs in the service sector and is therefore not applicable to this report. As a result, the following information is not indicative of the total extent of child and/or forced labor in Peru. Post does have limited information on child and/or forced labor in certain industries, which follows below. Copies of source material are available on request. Sources included the Government of Peru (GOP), the International Labor Organization (ILO), and other human rights organizations involved in labor and/or children's rights.

Scope of the Problem

¶12. (U) Child labor and/or forced labor continues in Peru, according to sources, though authoritative and comprehensive information on the subject is lacking. The majority of available information is based on anecdotal evidence. The ILO estimates that approximately two million children work in Peru, including 7,000 in Lima's historic center alone. Child laborers predominately work in the informal sector of Peru's economy, which encompasses some 70 percent of all workers in Peru. There is even less information, especially of a quantitative nature, on forced labor. The most comprehensive information on forced labor in Peru is from the ILO, which estimates that there are 20,000 to 45,000 forced laborers in Peru, most of whom work in the Amazonian jungle regions in the logging industry. The majority of forced labor in Peru is in the form of debt bondage, according to the ILO.

Specific Industries

¶13. (U) Mining: The ILO estimates that approximately 50,000 children work in Peru's gold mining industry. (Note: Based on field experience and conversations with experts, Embassy Economic Section finds this number, which was based on a survey conducted in 2000, extremely high. End Note.) Gold mining involves child labor and forced child labor, mostly in informal "artisan" mines in the Santa Filomena area of Ayacucho region and the Rinconada area of Puno. There tend to be large numbers of migrant and trafficked workers in those areas as well. According to the Peruvian NGO Association for Human Rights (APRODEH), more than 1000 children work in gold mining in the regions of Ayacucho, Arequipa, Ica and Huancavelica. Often they work alongside their parents or other family members. Older children work in the mining shafts and assist with grinding which involves moving large rocks. Younger children work sifting for gold and washing the gold. In Huaypetuhe, Madre de Dios, APRODEH found more than

500 children working in washing or cleaning gold. In Ananea, Puno, APRODEH found 400 children working in gold mines.

¶14. (U) Timber: Child and/or forced labor in the timber industry occurs mostly in Peru's jungle regions, particularly in Ucayali, Madre de Dios and Loreto. In the most comprehensive available study -- "Forced Labor in Timber Extraction in the Peruvian Amazonia" (2005)-- the ILO estimated that the timber industry utilized 33,000 forced laborers. Debt bondage was the most common form of labor control.

¶15. (U) Bricks: In 2005, the Center of Social Studies and Publications (CESIP) NGO published a study finding that 164 children worked alongside their families in the brick-making industry in the rural district of Huachipa, Lurigancho Chosica, located outside Lima. Of the 164 children, CESIP found that 40 percent were between the ages of 4 and 6, 36 percent were between the ages of 7 and 9, and 20 percent were between 10 and 12. Eighty-five percent of these children worked and attended school. The families received approximately 25.00 Peruvian Nuevo Soles (approximately USD 8.60) per 1000 bricks produced. An average family produced approximately 3000 to 4000 bricks per week. (The study was titled "A Situational Diagnostic of Children and Adolescents that Work in the Making of Artisan Bricks and Trash Recycling in the Slums of Huachipa: Union Peru, Santa Isabel and Santa Cruz".)

¶16. (U) Coca: Peru's Labor Ministry estimates that 59,525 children work in the coca industry, and that approximately 5000 of these are forced laborers. The Labor Ministry believes that while most children collect coca leaves, some

also help produce cocaine by mixing coca leaves with chemicals -- including sulfuric acid, kerosene, and others -- stepping barefoot on the mixture in pits or barrels. The Apurimac and Ene River Valley (VRAE) in Ayacucho and the Upper Huallaga Valley in San Martin are the primary locations for coca production.

¶17. (U) Fireworks: Capital Humano Social Alternativo's (Human Social Capital Alternative - CHS) Manual for Trafficking in Persons mentions that children work in fireworks workshops, but the report provides no further details and we have found no other sources.

¶18. (U) Stone: The National Initiative Group for Children's Rights in a report titled "Context and Child Labor" discusses child labor in the stone extraction industry and calls it one of the worst forms of child labor in Peru. The Labor Ministry concurs with Portocarrero's assessment but has provided no estimates on the scale of the problem.

¶19. (U) Castana Nuts (Brazilian Nut): CHS Alernativo's Manual for Trafficking Persons in Peru says that many victims are trafficked to castana nut production zones in Madre de Dios during the harvesting season from Arequipa, Lima, Puerto Maldonado, Cusco, Cajamarca and Iquitos. There are no estimates of how many persons, including children, work harvesting castana nuts each year.

Efforts to Eradicate Child and/or Forced Labor

¶110. (U) The GOP's National Plan to Eradicate Child Labor (2006-2010) calls for at least 50 percent of local governments to begin documenting child labor to help determine where and how children are working. The GOP's National Committee for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor is an intersectoral committee with participation from all ministries, unions, business, international organizations (including the ILO) and national NGOs. The efforts of the these different sectors include awareness-raising campaigns, after-school programs, workplace inspections, training initiatives, and outreach to child workers both in and out of school. There is a similar intersectoral body on forced labor called the National

Intersectoral Commission for the Eradication of Forced Labor.

The GOP also has a National Action Plan to Combat Forced Labor.

¶11. (U) In 2007 Lima's municipal government, under the Office of Social Management, began a program to address the more than 7,000 children working in the historic center by providing aid payments of approximately 320 Nuevo Soles per year, per child to families to discourage child labor. To receive payment, parents must ensure their children attend school.

¶12. (U) CESIP administers a project that works with 150 children and adolescents working in brick making and other industries in Huachipa. The project provides information to the Huachipa local community in order to raise consciousness about child labor and to provide direct education intervention to child workers. CESIP also works with parents to develop skills and training to help them find better employment. The program, which began in March 2008, will conclude in February 2011 and is funded by the Dutch Development Organization, CORDAID.

¶13. (U) The U.S. Department of Labor supports the "Preparate Para La Vida" (Prepare for Life) Program, which works with both in-school and out-of-school child workers in the cities of Lima, Trujillo, Cusco and Iquitos with the goal of reaching approximately 10,500 children and reducing child labor.

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